

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 16 and 19-30 are currently pending. Claims 17 and 18 have been cancelled. Claim 30 has been added and includes select features of claim 16. No new matter has been introduced by new claim 30 or any of the amendments to the existing claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 16, 17 and 19-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims address the Examiner's concerns. Applicants request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 16, 17 and 20-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over WO 01/70550 to Hinz (equivalent to U.S. 6,866,486 B2) in view of WO 01/73294 to Hauser (equivalent to U.S. 6,652,245 B2). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of these claims and respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Hinz and Hauser for the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 16, as amended, recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and Hauser, considered either alone or in combination, namely:

said fastening means comprising at least two locking arms formed on one cage part and at least two holes formed on another cage part, each locking arm having a resiliently deformable and unconstrained end configured for engaging a hole of another cage part upon relative displacement of the cage parts.

In contrast, Hauser discloses that a "bead 88 of the collar 86 snaps into the groove 90 of the sleeve 12" (see Hauser at column 4, lines 54-58). The bead 88 and the groove 90 are both annular (i.e., revolved) features, thus, Hauser discloses a single bead 88 and a single groove 90. Hauser does not disclose two holes or two locking arms. Furthermore, Hauser's bead is

not resiliently deformable and does not include an unconstrained end. Because claim 16 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and/or Hauser, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on the cited references.

Accordingly, claim 16 is allowable over both the Hinz and Hauser references. Claims 23-25 have been redrafted to depend from claim 16 and are allowable based upon their dependency. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 16 and 23-25 are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 20 recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and Hauser, considered either alone or in combination, namely "each cage part includes fastening means provided in pairs and lying diametrically opposite each other." The bead 88 and the groove 90 of the Hauser reference are both annular (i.e., revolved) features, thus, Hauser discloses a single bead 88 and a single groove 90. Thus, neither the groove nor the bead of the Hauser reference are provided in pairs.

Because claim 20 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and/or Hauser, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on the cited references. Accordingly, claim 20 is allowable over both the Hinz and Hauser references. Claims 21 and 22 are dependent upon claim 20, and therefore are allowable at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 20-22 are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 26 recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and Hauser, considered either alone or in combination, namely:

cage parts have a larger number of locking arms than locking recesses, and in that in a cage-part circumferential direction (U), a width (B) of the locking arms is considerably smaller than a width (b) of the locking recesses so that cage parts can be locked directly upon twisting the cage parts relative to each other in cage-part circumferential direction (U).

The bead 88 of the Hauser reference is annular (i.e., revolved), thus, Hauser does not disclose multiple locking arms. Furthermore, the width of the bead 88 is equal to circumference of the collar 86, and the width of the groove 90 is equal to the circumference of the sleeve 12. The circumference of the sleeve 12 and the collar 86 are substantially equal. In other words, the circumference (i.e., width, as claimed) of the groove 90 is substantially equal to the circumference (i.e., width, as claimed) of the bead 88. Therefore, Hauser does not disclose a locking arm having a width that is smaller than a width of a locking recess.

Because claim 26 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and/or Hauser, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on the cited references. Accordingly, claim 26 is allowable over both the Hinz and Hauser references. Claims 27 and 28 are dependent upon claim 26, and therefore are allowable at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 26-28 are respectfully requested.

Independent claim 29 recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and Hauser, considered either alone or in combination, namely the steps of:

displacing the cage parts in relation to each other thereby compressing
and elastically preloading the resetting spring between the two cage
parts; [and]
radially aligning fastening means of the cage parts together during the
displacing step.

Hinz does not disclose the step of displacing cage parts to compress a resetting spring or the step of radially aligning fastening means of cage parts together. Furthermore, Hauser's resetting spring is not preloaded between the ring 80 and the sleeve 12. According to Hauser, "the piston restoring spring 52 is largely unstressed when the piston collar 56 rests against the ring 80 of the filter 76" (see Hauser at column 4, lines 58-62, emphasis added). Additionally, Hauser does not disclose the step of radially aligning fastening means. The annular bead 88 of Hauser is simply pushed into the annular groove 90 of the sleeve 12.

Because claim 29 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz and/or Hauser, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on the cited references.

Accordingly, claim 29 is allowable over both the Hinz and Hauser references. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 29 are respectfully requested.

Claims 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hinz in view of Hauser and further in view of U.S. 2001/0056259 to Skinkle. Claim 18 has been cancelled. Claim 19 depends from claim 16 and recites limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz, Hauser and Skinkle considered either alone or in combination, namely:

said fastening means comprising at least two locking arms formed on one cage part and at least two holes formed on another cage part, each locking arm having a resiliently deformable and unconstrained end configured for engaging a hole of another cage part upon relative displacement of the cage parts.

According to Skinkle, "a series of barrel tabs 200 are formed on the outside of the syringe barrel 20. The cap 50 includes a lip 210 that fits over the top opening 55 of the syringe barrel 20. A series of cap tabs 215 are formed within the lip 210 of the cap 50, which can be snapped over the barrel tabs 200 to securely hold the cap 50 over the top opening 55 of the syringe barrel 20" (see Skinkle at paragraph 50). Neither the cap 50 nor the syringe barrel 20 includes holes for receiving a locking arm. Additionally, the barrel tabs 200 do not include unconstrained ends.

Because claim 19 includes limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Hinz, Hauser or Skinkle, *prima facie* obviousness cannot be established based on the cited references. Accordingly, claim 19 is allowable over the applied references. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 19 are respectfully requested.

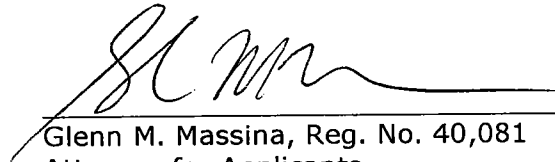
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Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes an interview will advance the prosecution of this application, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned to arrange the same.

Respectfully submitted,



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